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## THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AS KOINONIA

ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE 1991 CANBERRA STATEMENT ON UNITY

*A Study Document requested by  
THE JOINT WORKING GROUP  
between the  
Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches*

Ed. Günther Gassmann and John A. Radano

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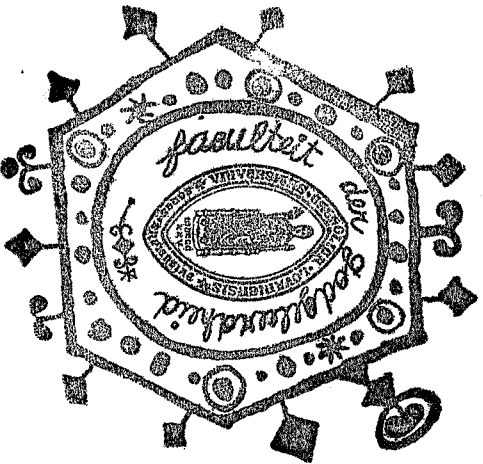
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## CONTENTS

<b>Preface:</b>	
The Joint Working Group's Request	1
<b>The Canberra Statement:</b>	
"The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling"	2
<b>The Canberra Statement in Historical Perspective:</b>	
Günther Gassmann and John Radano	4
<b>An Anglican Perspective:</b>	
Gillian R. Evans	10
<b>A Catholic Perspective:</b>	
Emmanuel Lanne, OSB	14
<b>An Orthodox Perspective:</b>	
Grigorios Larentzakis	19
<b>A Lutheran Perspective:</b>	
William Rusch	22
<b>A United-Reformed Perspective:</b>	
David Thompson	25
<b>Appendix: Statements on the Unity of the Church</b>	
(1) New Delhi 1961	31
(2) Nairobi 1975	
(3) Second Vatican Council	
<b>Contributors</b>	33



## PREFACE

The Joint Working Group (JWG) between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) was established in 1965 in order to foster relationships and cooperation between these two partners. Over the years it has encouraged and monitored a broad range of ecumenical endeavours and developments. As part of its mandate to consider ecclesiological issues which deal with the unity of the Church the JWG has requested a number of studies. The most recent are The Church: Local and Universal and The Notion of "Hierarchy of Truths": An Ecumenical Interpretation (Appendices to the Sixth Report of the JWG, Geneva-Rome 1990).

The JWG has affirmed that one of its priorities during the period between the WCC Assembly at Canberra in 1991 and its next Assembly in 1998, is "the Unity of the Church: Goal, Steps and Ecclesiological Implications". At its meeting in Wemmesen, Germany, March 8-14, 1992, the JWG discussed four specific areas of reflection and of relationships related to this priority. The first among these was a common consideration of the statement, "The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling" which the Canberra Assembly had adopted. A draft of this statement was prepared by the Faith and Order Standing Commission in which Roman Catholic theologians are full members.

The JWG agreed that a small group prepare a study document with ecumenical reflections on the Canberra statement. This would include a short historical summary in which the Canberra statement could be seen in light of previous ecumenical statements on unity, and also reflection and comments on it from Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic perspectives. It would not be an official commentary on the text by the JWG for this would go beyond the mandate of the JWG. The contributions would be the responsibility of each author. Nonetheless, the JWG hoped that such a small interpretative study on the Canberra statement would "assist in its interpretation and application" (Sixth Report of the JWG, Geneva-Rome 1990, Geneva: WCC, 1990, p.18)

At its meeting in Venice, May 17-22, 1993, the JWG considered this study document on the Canberra statement and agreed to its publication as a contribution to the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order at Santiago de Compostela, August 3-14, 1993 as well as a resource for study in the wider ecumenical community.

Venice, May 1993

## THE CANBERRA STATEMENT: "THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AS KOINONIA: GIFT AND CALLING"

1.1 The purpose of God according to Holy Scripture is to gather the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God (Eph. 1). The Church is the foretaste of this communion with God and with one another. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit enable the one Church to live as sign of the reign of God and servant of the reconciliation with God, promised and provided for the whole creation. The purpose of the Church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom.

1.2 The calling of the Church is to proclaim reconciliation and provide healing, to overcome divisions based on race, gender, age, culture, colour and to bring all people into communion with God. Because of sin and the misunderstanding of the diverse gifts of the Spirit, the churches are painfully divided within themselves and among each other. The scandalous divisions damage the credibility of their witness to the world in worship and service. Moreover, they contradict not only the Church's witness but also its very nature.

1.3 We acknowledge with gratitude to God that in the ecumenical movement the churches walk together in mutual understanding, theological convergence, common suffering and common prayer, shared witness and service, and they draw close to one another. This has allowed them to recognize a certain degree of communion already existing between them. This is indeed the fruit of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of all who believe in Christ Jesus and who struggle for visible unity now. Nevertheless, churches have failed to draw the consequences for their life from the degree of communion they have already experienced and the agreements already achieved. They have remained satisfied to co-exist in division.

2.1 The unity of the Church to which we are called is a koinonia given and expressed in the common confession of apostolic faith; a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled; and a common mission witnessing to all people to the gospel of God's grace and serving the whole of creation. The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness. This full communion will be expressed on the local and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action.

2.2 Diversities which are rooted in theological traditions, various cultural, ethnic or historical contexts are integral to the nature of communion; yet there are limits to diversity. Diversity is illegitimate when, for instance, it makes impossible the common

confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community. In communion diversities are brought together in harmony as gifts of the Holy Spirit, contributing to the richness and fullness of the Church of God.

3.1 Many things have been done and many remain to be done on the way towards the realization of full communion. Churches have reached agreements in bilateral and multilateral dialogues which are already bearing fruit, renewing their liturgical and spiritual life and their theology. In taking specific steps together the churches express and encourage the enrichment and renewal of Christian life, as they learn from one another, work together for justice and peace and care together for God's creation.

3.2 The challenge at this moment in the ecumenical movement as a reconciling and renewing moment towards full visible unity is for the Seventh Assembly of the WCC to call all churches:

- to recognize each other's baptism on the basis of the BEM document;
- to move towards the recognition of the apostolic faith as expressed through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the life and witness of one another;
- on the basis of convergence in faith in baptism, eucharist and ministry to consider, wherever appropriate, forms of eucharistic hospitality; we gladly acknowledge that some who do not observe these rites share in the spiritual experience of life in Christ;
- to move towards a mutual recognition of ministries;
- to endeavour in word and deed to give common witness to the gospel as a whole;
- to recommit themselves to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, linking more closely the search for sacramental communion of the Church with the struggles for justice and peace;
- to help parishes and communities express in appropriate ways locally the degree of communion that already exists.

4.1 The Holy Spirit as the promoter of koinonia (2 Cor. 13:13) gives to those who are still divided the thirst and hunger for full communion. We remain restless until we grow together according to the wish and prayer of Christ that those who believe in him may be one (John 17:21). In the process of praying, working and struggling for unity, the Holy Spirit comforts us in pain, disturbs us when we are satisfied to remain in our division, leads us to repentance and grants us joy when our communion flourishes.

## THE CANBERRA STATEMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

*Günther Gassmann and John A. Radano*

### I. From New Delhi 1961 to Canberra 1991

The Faith and Order movement came into being in 1910 and its work and efforts were defined by the clear mandate of seeking to overcome the doctrinal and other differences which had divided the churches for centuries. Soon the question of the goal of these efforts was raised despite the resistance of some who believed that the issue of the conditions and forms of Christian unity was put too early on the Faith and Order agenda. However, to reflect also on the kind and shape of "the unity we seek" seemed to be unavoidable and in line with the general experience that any movement in history needs to be goal-oriented in order not to lose its dynamics and orientation but rather to be inspired and sustained by looking forward towards a future goal.

As a consequence several concepts of the unity we seek emerged and were discussed and clarified in the Faith and Order movement, especially in preparation for and at its Second World Conference 1937 in Edinburgh. There, the concept of organic unity and union received a certain preference. It envisaged a coming together of different churches on the basis of agreed faith and order in a united church within a given local situation (a country or part of a larger nation). The creation of the united Church of South India in 1947 was greeted as an implementation of this concept. The many church union negotiations which were initiated in the decades following the establishment of the Church of South India were inspired by this same model of organic union.

It was only in 1961 that the World Council of Churches (WCC) itself took a position on the issue of the concepts and forms of the unity we seek. Taking up a paragraph from a text prepared by the Faith and Order Commission 1960 at St Andrews, the Assembly of the WCC at New Delhi in 1961 accepted a description of "the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church". This was a significant step and the New Delhi statement on unity immediately became one of the most referred to texts issued by the WCC. The statement clearly expresses the concept of organic unity with its emphasis on local (in its different meanings) unity. God's gift of unity "is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship...." This is, still in a general way, balanced by a reference to the universal dimension of unity in that the "all in each place" should be "united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages".

Furthermore, New Delhi, in its dense and succinct statement (which actually consists in one long sentence) defined the constitutive elements of visible unity which have since then become, in modified formulations, fundamental for all later statements on the unity of the Church. These are: common adherence to the one apostolic faith, common baptism and shared eucharist (presupposing agreement on and mutual recognition of these sacraments), the mutual recognition of members and ministries, common prayer,

witness and service. This unity is not to be created, but is "being made visible", and it is not aimed at for its own sake but stretches out in witness and service to all people. An important basis had been laid.

The Uppsala Assembly of the WCC in 1968 did not formulate a new statement, but in its report on "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church" it highlighted the universal dimension of Christian unity. Building on previous work in Faith and Order on the early councils and conciliarity and influenced by the perspective of universal history, which marked the Assembly, Uppsala looked towards a "truly universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life and witness". The Churches were called "to work for the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians, and lead the way into the future". Finally, and in this same basic orientation, the search for the unity of the Church and for the unity of humankind were linked together.

The reception of the conciliar idea by the theological discourse within the WCC was further consolidated at a Faith and Order consultation in Salamanca in 1973. A section of its report "The unity of the Church - Next Steps" became two years later the central paragraph of the report on "What unity requires", adopted by the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC. There, the emphasis of New Delhi on organic unity on local level and its identification of the constitutive elements of unity is linked in a coherent way with the universal expression of unity by the integration of the concept of conciliarity: "The one Church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united. ... each Church aims at maintaining sustained and sustaining relationships with her sister churches, expressed in conciliar gatherings whenever required for the fulfillment of their common calling".

Already before Nairobi 1975 a new stage in the ecumenical reflection on the unity we seek had been initiated by the growing number of bilateral dialogues between Christian World Communions. The strong involvement of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches in these dialogues and the renewed emphasis on confessional identities and their chance of enriching each other when their dividing aspects have been overcome, led to the development of new concepts of the unity we seek like "unity in reconciled diversity", the idea of a "communion of communions" or a future relationship between "sister churches". These concepts integrated basic elements of "organic unity" or "conciliar fellowship", but foresaw the realization of unity not necessarily in terms of a union or merger of churches. This more open horizon in view of different forms of unity has since the seventies marked the ecumenical discussion until today.

The Vancouver Assembly of the WCC in 1983 did not formulate a statement on unity, but underlined three essential marks of visible unity: (1) the common understanding and confession of the apostolic faith, (2) the mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry, and (3) common ways of decision-making and ways of teaching authoritatively. With the exception of the last point, which remains on the agenda for further work, the other two "marks" of unity had been at the center both of the multilateral dialogue in Faith and Order and of the bilateral dialogues during the last two decades. The remarkable agreements and convergencies reached in these dialogues and the continuing reflection on the goal of these dialogues formed the basis and encouragement for another attempt to describe the goal of all ecumenical efforts. As a result, a draft statement,

prepared at two Faith and Order meetings (Elchmiadzin/Armenia and Dunblane/Scotland) in 1990, was revised and adopted by the Canberra Assembly of the WCC in 1991 under the title "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling". This statement stands in obvious continuity with the earlier statements, especially with regard to the fundamental constituents of unity. But it reflects also the ongoing ecumenical discussion (including its refusal to propagate one particular model for implementing unity), it situates its formulations in a broader theological and historical framework and it adds a number of new elements.

What, then, are this broader framework and these new elements?

## II. The Canberra Statement 1991: new aspects of the unity we seek

Reflecting ecumenical insights and concerns of recent decades, the Canberra statement first of all puts the "unity we seek" in a broader framework than previous statements, both in terms of the world which the Church seeks to serve, and in terms of ecclesiology. The opening sentence calls attention to the wide context of the saving purpose of the Trinitarian God in relation to humanity and creation as the field in which the drama of salvation is worked out, saying that, the purpose of God according to Holy Scripture is to gather the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God (1.1).

This broader perspective is reflected also in the ecclesiological statements which follow immediately in numbers 1.1. and 1.2. Here the Canberra statement speaks more explicitly of the purpose of the Church than did New Delhi or Nairobi. The Church is the foretaste of communion with God and with one another. It lives, by reason of grace rooted in the life of the Trinity, as sign of the reign of God and servant of the reconciliation with God "promised and provided for the whole creation". Its purpose is "to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the Kingdom" (1.1).

From this, secondly, the mission of the Church is outlined in the context of present day history and in a way that heightens sharply, which had not been done previously, the obstacles to mission resulting from divisions. Thus, the Church is called to proclaim reconciliation and provide healing, to overcome divisions based on race, gender, age, culture, colour, and to bring all people into communion with God. But "the churches are painfully divided within themselves and among each other". Their scandalous divisions damage the credibility of their witness to the world and contradict also the very nature of the Church" (1.2).

Thirdly, and again a new element, the statement acknowledges that their involvement, experience and theological convergence in the ecumenical movement has allowed the churches "to recognize a certain degree of communion already existing between them" (1.3). We are already on the way towards unity. Then, fourthly, the key paragraph follows (2.1) in which the unity of the Church as Koinonia is spelled out in a concise and pointed way:

The unity of the church to which we are called is a Koinonia given and expressed in the common confession of the apostolic faith; a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled; and a common mission witnessing to all people to the gospel of God's grace and serving the whole of creation. The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness. This full communion will be expressed on the local and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action (2.1).

This paragraph reflects an important evolution in the understanding of the unity that is sought, as defined within the World Council of Churches. The statement describes this unity in terms of an ecclesiology of communion. It uses the term Koinonia as the first and fundamental expression of the ecclesiology envisioned. Afterwards the terms "fellowship" and "communion", into which Koinonia is usually translated, are used and point to the same reality. Whereas previous statements spoke of the goal as being "one fully committed fellowship", and "being united with the whole Christian fellowship" (New Delhi) or of the One Church as being "a conciliar fellowship of local churches" (Nairobi), this statement speaks more explicitly of the goal as "full communion". This, however, should not be understood as being in contradiction with those earlier formulations.

The focus here on koinonia/communion ecclesiology reflects in large part the contribution of Roman Catholic involvement in the ecumenical movement especially after the Second Vatican Council. The presence and full participation of Catholic theologians in the Commission on Faith and Order after the Uppsala Assembly of the WCC (1968) added significantly to the emphasis on koinonia ecclesiology within Faith and Order studies, even though this new perspective was already emerging there, particularly, but not exclusively through the contribution of Orthodox theologians.

Furthermore, paragraph 2.1 cites the four traditional marks of the Church in its central affirmation, according to which "the goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church in its fullness". The previous statements did not explicitly refer to these four marks of the Church together. The formulation of the final goal of the efforts towards unity, to recognize in each other the Church in its fullness, characterized by these marks, also seems to be an advance over against earlier texts.

Moreover, the statement integrates more directly the relationship between the local and universal expressions of the unity of the Church. The New Delhi statement was seen to stress local unity, although it also envisioned its universal expression. The Uppsala report stressed the need "to make visible the bonds which unite Christians in universal fellowship". The Nairobi statement built on both reports and stated that "The one Church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united... Each local church recognizes the others as belonging to the same Church of Christ and guided by the same Spirit".



The Canberra statement puts the local and universal expressions of the Church as communion in a close and natural relationship, saying that "This full communion will be expressed on the local and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in one faith..." This short formulation, however, needs further development.

Also, the Canberra statement reflects a more direct appreciation of sacramentality and sacramental life than previous statements. The latter, too, had given importance to baptism and the eucharist. But the Canberra statement conveys the idea that the Koinonia being sought is characteristically expressed also in "a common sacramental life". Baptism is presented in the sense of a sacrament of initiation into this sacramental life and the centrality of the eucharist for this common life in koinonia is affirmed.

"The unity of the Church... is a Koinonia given and expressed in the common confession of the apostolic faith; a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; ..." (2.1).

Fifthly, and this is again a new element, the Canberra statement speaks of the fact and importance of diversity in relation to unity. The unity we seek must be a unity in diversity. "Diversities which are rooted in theological traditions, various cultural, ethnic or historical contexts, are integral to the nature of communion" (2.2). At the same time reflection also takes up the issue of the limits to diversity. A cautious nuance is made to illustrate when the limits are surpassed. "Diversity is illegitimate", it states, "when for instance it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour (reference to the basis of the WCC), the same yesterday today and forever (Heb 13:8); and salvation and the final destiny of humanity as preached in Holy Scripture and preached by the Apostolic community" (2.2).

Sixthly, in light of the progress made in ecumenism (3.1) the Canberra statement directly addresses the Churches and formulates seven concrete challenges in response to which the churches might take concrete steps toward full visible unity (3.2). These steps specifically build on significant ecumenical advances in recent years. Some of these steps are linked clearly to recent major Faith and Order studies, such as "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM) and "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today". Thus the churches are called "to recognize each other's baptism on the basis of the BEM document"; and "to move towards the recognition of the apostolic faith as expressed through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the life and witness of one another". Another reflects a third Faith and Order study on "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of the Human Community", and, at the same time, a major thrust since the Vancouver Assembly, the process on "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation". It calls the churches "to recommit themselves to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, linking more closely the search for the sacramental communion of the Church with the struggles for justice and peace". Thus, the concrete steps proposed seek to harvest and receive the results of dialogue and activity that have come to fruition especially since the Nairobi statement on "the Unity we seek" of 1975.

The Canberra statement, then, despite its limitations, contributes to the ecumenical understanding of the visible unity which is the aim of the ecumenical movement. The statement develops this understanding within an ecclesiology of communion, and by bringing into it insights resulting from ecumenical discourse of recent years. The statement, therefore, sets a new stage for the continuing reflection on the nature of the unity we seek.

No claim is made by the Canberra statement that it represents the final vision of "the unity we seek". The statement, rather, represents a vision of unity reflecting the results of theological dialogues within the ecumenical movement during recent decades, and suggesting steps forward in the ecumenical journey toward the goal of full communion. Perhaps not every Church can easily endorse all the proposed seven steps forward. Admittedly, too, there are issues in need of further theological clarification, especially in the area of ecclesiology. While progress has been made, for example, concerning an ecumenical understanding of the relationship between the local and universal expressions of the Church within an ecclesiology of communion, the question of a universal ministry of unity has barely been touched within Faith and Order studies, (though this question has been taken up in several bilateral dialogues). A future ecumenical statement on the nature of visible unity will no doubt reflect the insights to be gained from dialogue in the years ahead on issues which still constitute barriers to ecumenical advance. To this we look forward with confidence and hope. And with the conviction that at this present moment the Canberra statement urges us to a renewed commitment to the goal of visible unity and its implications for the Churches to become a communion that serves as an instrument for God's reconciling and transforming purpose for humanity and creation.

## AN ANGLICAN PERSPECTIVE

Gillian R. Evans

We have reached, I think everyone agrees, a difficult stage in the ecumenical journey. The high hopes of the first decades after the Second Vatican Council have become longer-term. But nothing that has happened to slow us up gives any reason for diminution of the vision. We should see ourselves at a new and undeniably further point along the path. That is the two-fold main thrust of the Canberra Statement. It is both a stocktaking exercise, which seeks to show where we are now, and a call to maintain the freshness and power of the vision of one Church in one faith in one Christ.

In the statement itself, the vision quite properly comes before the stocktaking, but I should like to begin here with the document's review of the present position. There are now a great many agreed statements, arrived at bilaterally and multi-laterally. It is taking a long time for these to be responded to, because that has to be done initially within the separated communities. It also becomes apparent (notably in the worldwide *Responses to BEM* which constitute the most sizeable body of texts-in-response), that churches find themselves challenged by the task of deciding their own views. They discover the weaknesses in their own structures of decision-making and, above all, the difficulty of drawing the whole people of God actively into a process which is for most of them unfamiliar and even remote. At the same time, a good deal of practical working and worshipping together is happening locally, and that is helping to ease this sense of unfamiliarity. The often-cited gap between the 'grass-roots' and the theologians is slowly being bridged, and it is being bridged simultaneously within and between communions. There is certainly renewal in that, and the 'fruit' of dialogue of which the Canberra Statement speaks.

But while that process waits on the Holy Spirit (as the Canberra Statement emphasises in its conclusion), the churches have to seek to make moves of a practical sort towards a visible unity. The Statement twice uses a framework here which depends broadly upon the principles set out in the Anglican Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888. The Quadrilateral was intended to be an ecumenical document, in that it sought to describe a minimum basis, under Scripture, of faith, sacrament and common ministry upon which churches could come together. The modern restatement here speaks of these, as the nineteenth century could not yet see to do, in the context of an ecclesiology of *koinonia*, *koinonia*, or 'communion', brought to ecumenical prominence in the introduction to *The Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)*, has proved an ideal to which Christians of a wide diversity of communions can warm. It has the great advantage of avoiding the centuries-old confrontation between the idea of a 'visible' or structural unity, and that of an 'invisible' or spiritual unity, in favour of a concept of unity in which mutual love and respect are both visible and invisible.

The Canberra Statement talks of 'the common confession of the apostolic faith' as a gift of God and an expression of communion. It is, however, important to recognise

clearly that the objective is to make that confession literally 'together' as one body of Christ, and not severally in separated communions. The Statement looks now to a movement 'towards the recognition of the apostolic faith as expressed through the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the life and witness of one another'. 'The' before 'apostolic faith' at both these points in the Statement is load-bearing. There can be only one faith in the one Church to which we long to be restored. It is argued here that it is most appropriately and securely expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed to which the majority of Christians have subscribed since it was framed in the fourth century. But there remains of course a problem in the case of those Christian communities which would prefer to remain non-creedal (in that they do not formally subscribe to any written creed). The Canberra Statement seems to make the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed a vehicle or instrument of the full expression of the one apostolic faith in the common life and witness of the churches, and thus allows room for these communities in that way. But the issue of the place of a common creed remains to be addressed.

The Statement speaks of the Church's sacramental life both as a gift and expression of *koinonia*, and as a part of the churches' life on the way to *koinonia*. In the second section it is seen as 'a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship'. The text ought to distinguish more frankly here perhaps between the stage of unity achieved in baptism, in which we are now almost everywhere agreed that we are one; and the eucharist, in which to be one is our great desire and still our goal. In the third section, two main points are made. The first speaks of the extension of eucharistic 'hospitality' wherever this is possible, 'on the basis of convergence in baptism, eucharist and ministry'. That is clearly what we should be doing, but the need to use the term 'hospitality' shows how far we still have to go. Members of a family do not need to speak of 'hospitality'; they live a common life. The second acknowledges that 'some who do not observe these rites share in the spiritual experience of life in Christ'. Two issues are incompletely distinguished here. The intention is, it seems, to include those Christian communities (such as the Society of Friends) which do not celebrate the sacraments, or not in visible rites. But there is a further and deeper issue, of the meaning of 'these rites', in terms of the understanding of its significance and its effect, with which different traditions celebrate the eucharist. (I shall come back to the question of 'effect' in a moment).

The two references to common ministry are also not quite perfectly complementary. The section on *koinonia* speaks of 'a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognised and reconciled'; the section on the way forward, of a 'move towards a mutual recognition of ministries'. 'Reconciliation' ought of course to have a place alongside 'recognition' in both sections equally. The mention of 'members' in the second section is not taken up in the third. That is a pity, both because the relationship between baptism and membership is of importance, and because for communities which think especially in terms of 'every-member ministry', mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministries must involve discussion of the place of all members of the community in the process, in terms which are only hinted at here. The Canberra Statement avoids the reference to the question of the role of *episcopate*, which is prominent in the Lambeth Quadrilateral in its controversial reference to the 'historic episcopate'. We have come a good way since 1888 in our understanding of the ministry of oversight in the Church, but the role of episcopal ministry in a future united Church is



far from agreed. It is, however, a matter which arises in all schemes for unity, locally or more widely, and one which has to be addressed seriously by ecumenists in the immediate future.

The idea of common mission is not explicitly in the Lambeth Quadrilateral, but it is rightly central here. The emphasis in the Canberra Statement is of our time, upon 'witnessing to all people to the gospel of grace and serving the whole of creation', in the second section. In the third, these are separated so that we are called upon to 'endeavour in word and deed to give common witness to the gospel as a whole', and to re-commit ourselves 'to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, linking more closely the search for sacramental communion of the church with the struggle for justice and peace'. A number of potentially divisive issues are held only rather precariously together here. 'Wholeness' is closely related to unity, but there are ancient problems to be resolved as to whether it is God's intention to save all mankind, or only those he chooses; and modern ones about the duty of Christians towards those of other faiths and towards the ecological welfare of the non-human creation.

The Canberra Statement turns at the end of its outline of *koinonia* to the linked issues of the local church and diversity. One of the long-standing needs with which ecumenical conversations engage is a means of establishing mutual acceptance of the ecclesiality of diverse bodies of Christians, some of which are local churches in the sense of being single congregations or dioceses, some in the sense of being national or ethnic churches, some in the sense of being denominational churches. Such mutual acceptance as equals, and its concomitant working together, requires common structures of decision-making, to which the Canberra Statement refers with the term 'deliberation' and by mentioning 'conciliar forms of life and action'. But it is important to acknowledge that there is still much incommensurability between these different types of ecclesial entity, and a great deal of ecclesiological work to be done before we can see clearly how they can work together freely in this way.

Diversity is a still larger issue, of which this is only a part. The Canberra Statement says two important things about this wider diversity: that the test of a right diversity, reflecting the richness of the gifts of the Spirit, is harmoniousness; and that any diversity which makes common confession of the apostolic faith impossible cannot be blessed by the Spirit.

The opening paragraphs of the Statement have a bearing on this problem of locally and diversity in their emphasis upon 'gathering'. Reformers of the sixteenth century West pointed to 'gathering' as constitutive for the making of a church, and the theme is echoed today in the Statements produced by Orthodox-Roman Catholic conversations. The Canberra Statement sees this gathering as taking place at a level so universal as to draw 'the whole of creation under the Lordship of Christ Jesus', but it is of its essence that gathering is also always local and particular in its manifestation. The 'gathering' envisaged by the Canberra text both draws into Christ and reaches outwards 'to manifest communion in prayer and action', so as 'to point' the way 'to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom'. It would, I think, have been valuable to have had the particularity and locality of this process underlined, so as to set the scene better for a fuller discussion of problems of

'locality' and 'diversity'. Something is achieved in this direction by the linking of sin and 'the misunderstanding of the diverse gifts of the Spirit'. That distorts diversity and makes it division. In division there is suffering, and a broken witness, a distorted sign.

An implication of what is said in this intentionally visionary introduction to the Statement is that the Church has to be not only a true sign, but an effective sign. It is to do salvific work in the world by showing forth its oneness in the Lord. It is to be a foretaste of communion with God and a servant of reconciliation. This must make it constitutive for the Church's being truly the Church that it should be one, and places the ecumenical task in the forefront.

The Statement is positive about the concept of 'degrees of communion'. Imperfect communion is still communion, and we are a great deal closer than we have been. But it is a pity to speak of 'full' communion. The 'communion' we seek should have no adjectives to qualify it.

## A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Emmanuel Lanne

In adopting the idea of *koinonia*/communion as the key word to describe the unity we seek in our joint work in Faith and Order, the Canberra assembly made a choice which will facilitate dialogue with the major Christian World Communions. From a Roman Catholic point of view it should be recalled, first, that the idea of communion was highlighted by the Second Vatican Council in defining the relationship existing among all Christians. Implicitly present in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church "Lumen Gentium" (no. 15), this idea is central in the Decree on Ecumenism promulgated by the Council. The aim of ecumenical activity is the restoration of full communion among all Christians and all churches. This quest for full communion is based on "a certain degree of communion" which, whether through faith in Christ, through baptism or through sharing the same holy scriptures, has never ceased to exist among all the followers of Christ.

In the bilateral conversations conducted with the other world communions by the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II, the idea of communion/*koinonia* has been of central importance in the discussions on ecclesiology.

In the conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion (ARCIC I, 1981) the idea of *koinonia* is present in all the "agreed statements" and, as the introduction to the Final Report (para. 6) says: "This theme of *koinonia* runs through our statements. In them we present the eucharist as the effectual sign of *koinonia*, episcopate as serving the *koinonia* and primacy as a visible link and focus of *koinonia*." The same text later makes two complementary statements: "The church as *koinonia* requires visible expression because it is intended to be the 'sacrament' of God's saving work. A sacrament is both sign and instrument. The *koinonia* is a sign that God's purpose in Christ is being realized in the world by grace. It is also an instrument for the accomplishment of this purpose, inasmuch as it proclaims the truth of the gospel and witnesses to it by its life, thus entering more deeply into the mystery of the Kingdom. The community thus announces what it is called to become" (no. 7). This gives rise to the second affirmation, which is: "The *koinonia* is grounded in the word of God preached, believed and obeyed" (para. 8).

In the second phase of the dialogue between Roman Catholics and Anglicans (ARCIC II) this idea of communion was explored in greater depth in a new paper. "This statement on communion differs from previous ARCIC reports in that it does not focus specifically on doctrinal questions that have been historically divisive. Nor does it seek to treat all the issues pertaining to the doctrine of the church. Its purpose is to give substance to the affirmation that Anglicans and Roman Catholics are already in a real, as yet imperfect, communion and to enable us to recognize the degree of communion that exists both within and between us. Moreover, we believe that within the perspective of communion the outstanding difficulties that remain between us will be more clearly understood and are more likely to be resolved; thus we shall be helped to grow into a more profound communion." (1) The document is in five parts: communion unfolded in

scripture; communion: sacramentality and the church; communion: apostolicity, catholicity and holiness; unity and ecclesial communion; communion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It has been objected that this text has contributed very little that is new by comparison with ARCIC I, but in fact it deserves credit for clearly setting out all the components of communion.

Parallel to this, the concept of communion was examined in a special study by the Joint Commission on Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation. (2) The approach adopted in this common document is quite different from that of the Roman Catholic-Anglican conversations. Rather than being a description of the church as communion, it is a practical plan for regaining full community. Moreover, the document proceeds on the basis of premises held in common by Lutherans and Catholics: communion is given by grace; its mediation is first through the word, then through the sacrament and lastly through the ministry. Elsewhere the document reviews the divergences between Catholics and Lutherans and also deals in detail with the realization of community, under the headings: unity of faith, unity of hope and unity of love; the form of community as visible unity, unity in (reconciled) diversity, dynamic unity; and the implications of all-encompassing community for all Christians and for the world. The second part of the statement follows the same outline and looks in turn at the steps towards unity. It is worth noting that this text was produced at the same time as a common statement by the same Joint Commission on the *Confessio Augustana*. This statement discovers in the Augsburg confession "a common mind on basic doctrinal truths which points to Jesus Christ, the living centre of our faith" (para. 17). The joint statement on "Ways to Community" followed on from a very important joint statement on the eucharist (1978) which showed a deep measure of community in the sacrament (cf. especially paras 13-28).

The Roman Catholic Church has also taken up the theme of *koinonia* in other bilateral conversations. First, however, we should perhaps note that the conversation with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches produced a statement entitled "Towards a Common Understanding of the Church" (1990) which did not take *koinonia* as the basis of its reflection. The document sets out a common doctrine on "The calling of the church and its role in justification by grace through faith" (paras 80-88) in which we together affirm "the ministerial and instrumental role of the church in the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments" (paras 85-86, 94). Thereafter, however, the document deals at length with two apparently incompatible conceptions of the church: the Reformed view of the church as *creatura verbi*, and the Catholic view of the church as *sacramentum gratiae*. In fact "we are agreed in recognizing the radical dependence of the church in receiving the transcendent gift which God makes to it and we recognize that gift as the basis of its activity of service for the salvation of humanity. But we do not yet understand the nature of this salutary action in the same way" (para. 112). No doubt further reflection on the nature of ecclesial *koinonia* would make it possible to bring these viewpoints closer together.

The concept of *koinonia* was briefly analyzed in the conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council in the document "Towards a Statement on the Church" (1986, para. 23), and it is the basic theme in the Pentecostal-Catholic conversations "Perspectives on *Koinonia*" (1989) treating the themes:

koinonia and the word of God, the Holy Spirit and the New Testament vision of koinonia, koinonia and baptism, koinonia in the life of the church.

The conversations in which the idea of koinonia has undoubtedly played the most essential role, however, are those between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox church, where it encompasses the whole mystery of the church, the life of faith, sacramental life and the structure of the church. This can be seen in three statements produced by the Joint Commission: "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity" (1982), "Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church" (1987), and "The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church" (1988).

In the documents produced by the various conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and other world communions we thus find a remarkable degree of convergence on the idea of koinonia/communio. But this is true also of the other bilateral conversations between the different world communions. As is noted by the report of the Fifth Forum on Bilateral Conversations, "koinonia is the fundamental understanding of the church emerging from the bilateral dialogues". (3)

This being so, it is only natural that the Canberra assembly should have endorsed Faith and Order's proposal that the idea of "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling" should be developed in greater depth. In the two pages of the Canberra report devoted to this subject the different aspects of koinonia are presented one after the other. This work marks an important stage in our common attempts to define more closely what it is that we seek. The New Delhi assembly (1961) gave a description of unity which turned out to be a milestone; Nairobi (1975) made further progress by proposing "conciliar fellowship" as the goal to be attained. After the approval of the document on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" by the Vancouver assembly (1983), it was indeed time to bring out the ecclesial implications of that document in a reflection on the church as koinonia.

Besides, from the point of view from which the Catholic Church understands koinonia, the Canberra text contains new and quite interesting elements.

In the first place, it starts from the idea that between all Churches there exists, despite long-standing divisions, "a certain degree of communion", and that this is the "fruit of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the midst of all who believe in Christ Jesus and who struggle for visible unity now". We can recognize in these affirmations the fundamental concept put forward by the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II, in order to engage Catholics in the ecumenical movement. These affirmations are particularly to be found in the preface to the Decree and in No. 3.

In the second place, we should note the three primary dimensions through which the Canberra declaration describes the unity of the Church as koinonia: the common confession of the apostolic faith, a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship, a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognised and reconciled. These three primary dimensions of koinonia correspond to those which the Roman Catholic tradition considers to be

essential: communion in faith, the sacraments and the canonical order of the Church. Moreover, we note that for the third dimension of koinonia, the formulations vary from one theologian to the next. Previously, some understood communion as the "government of the Christian community"; today we speak more gladly of the "ecclesial life" in its unity and structure, or even of communion in the canonical order of the community. In fact, these formulations may be summed up by all that English expression conveys by the term "order". Nevertheless, the expression retained by the Canberra declaration - "a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognised and reconciled" - has a particularly ecumenical colouring which limits its scope, since it addresses explicitly the reciprocal recognition of ministries, members of the Church and their reconciliation. For in the Roman Catholic tradition, the third dimension of koinonia surely implies this recognition of ministries, but with a broader vision which goes beyond the internal problems of the Church or Churches, so embracing the mission of proclaiming the Gospel. For this reason, in our opinion, the Canberra declaration adds a fourth dimension of communion/koinonia: a common mission witnessing to the gospel of God's grace to all people and serving the whole creation. However, as has been said, this fourth dimension is already contained in the third, preceding it, since the missionary witness borne to the Gospel is a part of mutually recognised ministry, in the same way as is also service given to the whole of creation.

The three following phrases of the declaration also call for comment from the Roman Catholic point of view. There can be nothing other than agreement with the first phrase: "The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness". The last words - "in its fullness" - are very important, since Catholics in the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II recognise in other Churches and Ecclesial communities elements of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, but not its fullness. For this reason, there exists a certain communion/koinonia between them, but not the fullness of this koinonia.

In the following phrase we find again elements inherited from the descriptions of unity which we seek, such as they were formulated at New Delhi (1961), Salamanca (1973) and Nairobi (1975). It is quite correct to indicate the local and universal levels of koinonia, but their expression through the conciliar forms of life and action allows a lack of precision to remain, which was already criticised in the preceding statements. Firstly, what is meant by "conciliar forms"? In its fullest sense, does the word "conciliar" convey the sense of "council", and in what sense should it be understood? (In French, there is a distinction between "conseil" and "concile" in the technical sense). Moreover, full communion is a reality which exists in continuity and in its own right. It can express itself through "conciliar forms", but also through other means, for example, if in all Churches and Christian communities the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed is professed and recited in the same way, as the Faith and Order Commission has presented it, there is a case of local and universal expression of full communion without reference to conciliar forms, whatever they might be. The conciliar forms of life and action are therefore very important and significant elements in the expression of full communion, but they are not the only elements, and they need to be clarified.

The last phrase of this paragraph is also very appropriate: "In such communion

churches are bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action". However, it will be clarified that this link of communion between the Churches is not only "in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action". It is also - and in a sense primarily: "in confessing the one faith and celebrating the one eucharist". To speak of full communion/koinonia without explicitly mentioning the eucharistic celebration in that context seems to be a regression in relation to what was stated earlier in the paragraph: among the dimensions of the unity of the Church as koinonia, there is the "one eucharistic fellowship".

Despite these reservations, it remains true that the Canberra declaration concerning koinonia, from the Roman Catholic Church's point of view, marks a considerable step forward. There is confirmation of this in the paragraph which follows (2.2), making the distinction between elements of diversity which form part of the nature of communion and those which are unlawful, because they hinder common confession of Jesus Christ.

## NOTES

1. *Church as Communion*, London, CTS/Church House Publishing, 1991, no. 2.
2. *Ways to Community*, Geneva, LWF, 1980.
3. *Fifth Forum on Bilateral Conversations*, Faith and Order paper no. 156, Geneva, WCC, 1989, p.46, no. 3.

## AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE

*Grigoris Larentzakis*

From an Orthodox standpoint, it has to be said at once that the new prominence given to the idea of church unity as koinonia in the World Council of Churches is most welcome. This is not only because this approach has been developed at the highest level within the WCC by the Faith and Order Commission, at the request of the central committee, and then revised and adopted by the WCC assembly in Canberra, but also because Orthodox ecclesiology as a whole, and so also the Orthodox view of the unity of the church, is precisely that of koinonia or *communio*. To use a modern yet genuinely Christian terminology, this means the unity of the church as lived and embodied in the diversity, or koinonia, of the many local churches in the polycentric Orthodox church structure of autocephalous or autonomous churches.

What we mean by koinonia here, therefore, is not a koinonia of incomplete *part-churches* but rather the *communio* of churches which, as *local churches*, possess the fullness of the *mysterium* and a fully ecclesial identity, not least in the celebration of the holy eucharist. (1) In this context, it means that a universal church cannot exist apart from its concrete form of existence in the local churches constituted by the eucharistic synaxis. In other words these local churches are, on the one hand, "catholic" in a qualitative -- not a quantitative -- sense, just as the church fathers saw and described them to be and, on the other hand, they are constituted by the celebration of the eucharist in the eucharistic assembly. In the language of Orthodox theology, this is the eucharistic ecclesiology. These basic inherent ecclesiological characteristics of the local churches cannot be spatially absolutized, since that would result in the isolation of these churches and the consequent destruction of koinonia.

In Orthodox theology it is the theology of the Trinity that provides the theological basis of this koinonia ecclesiology. Although, as St Gregory of Nazianzus emphasized, "no one has ever yet discovered nor ever will discover what God is in his nature and being", (2) the biblical account of the operations of the three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, provides, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, an access to the Trinitarian reality which is *sufficient* for our human insufficiency. While this is not the place for an account of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as such, it can be said in the context of our specific theme that the three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, exist in koinonia, bound together by the bonds of everlasting love. In the Holy Trinity, therefore, love is not to be identified exclusively with the Holy Spirit but binds all three persons -- equal in worth and essence -- very intensively and perichoretically together, that is, in mutual interpenetration. In this view of the three divine persons, none of the three persons is more divine than the others. The notion of subordination, too, has been condemned by the church as heresy. In the (communal) existence of the three divine persons thus understood, we have been given in an absolute and paradigmatic form the solution of the problem of the simultaneity of unity and diversity, as well as "the principle of *collegiality* in unity and the principle of *autocephaly*" (3) for the polycentric conciliar structure in the Orthodox church.

This insistence on the fundamental importance of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity for ecclesiology and for the unity of the church is not just some arbitrary whim of a few theologians; on the contrary, it corresponds to the will and express petition of Jesus himself in his "high priestly prayer" as recorded in the 17th chapter of St John's gospel: "That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may also be one in us." (4) We have here not only the biblical instruction as to how the *koinonia* of Christians shall develop, both horizontally with one another and vertically with God himself, but also the express and immediate will of the Lord that it should be so -- "that the world may believe". (5)

Applied to the question of church unity as *koinonia*, this means that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity must serve as model and example for this communal ecclesiology. As section 2 of the theological consultation of the Conference of European Churches on the theme "The Reconciling Power of the Trinity in the Life of the Church and the World", held at Goslar, 22-26 November 1982, put it: "Just as the divine persons are real persons, so too the local churches are real churches fully sacramental and ecclesial in character (catholic) in the celebration of the eucharistic mystery; they are not merely part of a whole. The whole church of Christ is constituted not by adding together part church to part church, but is expressed by the communion of local churches in mutual interpenetration (*perichoresis*). Conciliar community of churches is thus an integral part of the concept of Trinity." (6)

The *koinonia* ecclesiology is also one of the main pillars of the first joint statement of the official dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches on the theme: "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity". In this document, too, the basis of this *koinonia* is the eucharistic and Trinitarian dimension: "When the believer communicates in the Lord's body and blood, he does not receive a part of Christ but the whole Christ. In the same way, the local church which celebrates the eucharist gathered around its bishop is not a section of the body of Christ... Like the community of the apostles gathered around Christ, each eucharistic assembly is truly the holy church of God, the body of Christ." (7) The local churches, therefore, are not *part-churches* in any qualitatively relativizing sense. That is the declared view of the members of the international joint commission of both churches. As for the Trinitarian basis of the *communio* of the local churches, the same document states: "... because the One and Only God is the communion of three Persons, the one and only church is a communion of many communities and the local church a communion of persons. The one and unique church finds her identity in the *koinonia* of the churches. Unity and multiplicity appear so linked that one could not exist without the other." (8) When recent documents of a church relativize these basic principles of ecclesiology and of the *communio ecclesiarum*, it is the credibility of the dialogue itself that is in danger of being relativized. This is the last thing we need at the present juncture.

It is clear from this brief summary that, for Orthodox theology and for the Orthodox church, the restoration of church unity on the basis of *koinonia* can only be welcomed if it continues work on the Canberra assembly's correct affirmation that a certain degree of communion already exists between the churches. (9) In other words: when the presuppositions of full *koinonia* are not only seen but also accepted and realized so that, as the Canberra statement rightly says, the impression is not given that diversity

has no limits. (10) Another point that needs to be made is that the goal of full ecclesial and sacramental *koinonia* certainly cannot be attained at the level of canon law alone, nor even by doctrine and reason alone. We must have the courage to differentiate between the essential and the unessential so as to avoid giving priority to the unessential, thus creating an obstacle to *koinonia*. (11) Cardinal Ratzinger is right to stress that "the claim to truth should not be made where it is not necessarily and unalterably valid. We must not impose as truth what is really an historically evolved form more or less closely connected with the truth. In particular, therefore, when the force of truth as an absolute imperative is brought into play, there must also be a matching candour which guards against any overhasty commandeering of the truth and is ready to seek with the eyes of love for the inner breadth of the True." (12) The challenges set out in sections 3.1 and 3.2(13) of the document include important steps which will help us to advance along the way towards the achievement of full communion.

#### NOTES

1. Cf. G. Larentzakis, "Über die Bedeutung der Ortskirche in der orthodoxen Theologie", in *Orthodoxes Forum*, 2, 1988, pp.231ff.
2. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 28, 17, PG 36, 48C.
3. St Hartanakis, "Die Entwicklung der Ekklesiologie in der neueren griechisch-orthodoxen Theologie", in *Catholicia*, 28, 1974, 9.
4. John 17:21. See G. Larentzakis, "Trinitarisches Kirchenverständnis", in *Trinität. Aktuelle Perspektiven der Theologie*, Hg. W. Breunig, Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1984, 89.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Cf. Occasional Paper no. 15, Conference of European Churches, Geneva. Report of the study consultation of the CEC, 22-26 November 1982, Goslar, FRG, on "The Reconciling Power of the Trinity in the Life of the Church and the World".
7. In *Information Service*, 49, 1982, Vatican.
8. *Ibid.*
9. "The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling", para. 1.3, in *Signs of the Spirit*, official report, WCC seventh assembly, Canberra 1991, ed. M. Kinamon, Geneva, 1991, p. 173.
10. *Ibid.*, para. 2.2, p. 173.
11. Cf. G. Larentzakis, "Einheit der Kirche II, orth. Sicht", in *Ökumene-Lexikon*, ed. H. Krüger u.a., Frankfurt a.M., 2nd ed. 1987, p. 306.
12. J. Ratzinger, "Prognosen für die Zukunft des Ökumenismus", in *Ökumenisches Forum* 1, 1977, 36.
13. Cf. "The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling", *op. cit.*, paras 3.1 and 3.2, pp. 173-174.

## A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE

William G. Rusch

The seventh assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra adopted and transmitted to the churches an important statement on unity. The document had been requested by the Central Committee, and its earlier drafts were prepared by the Faith and Order Commission. The text was also discussed and amended in Section III of the Canberra Assembly. *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling* must be viewed in the succession of statements from the World Council of Churches, which deal with unity, e.g., texts from New Delhi in 1961 and Nairobi in 1975. As such the Canberra statement, in spite of some criticisms and indications of shortcomings, reflects a growing maturity with the ecumenical movement and its immediate context. Both the content and the status of the text indicate that the statement deserves careful study by the churches.

In this brief paper the Canberra statement is reviewed by one Lutheran through the particular lens of that confessional tradition. Any Lutheran evaluation of Canberra is greatly assisted by the fact that an earlier assembly of the Lutheran World Federation approved its own statement on unity. In 1984 the seventh assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Budapest, issued the document *The Unity We Seek*. In what follows the text of Canberra will be commented upon in the light of the Lutheran statement from Budapest.

The title of the Canberra statement is significant. The concept of *koinonia* is acknowledged both as a gift from the Lord of the church and a calling to the church to evidence this characteristic. Such a stress on *koinonia* is compatible not only with the Budapest statement, but with understandings of church unity found in many churches today, including Anglicans, Lutherans, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches.

In section 1.1 unity is placed in the larger context of the Lordship of Christ over all creation. The church is a foretaste of this communion with God and with one another, and a sign of the reign of God. The purpose of the church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion, and to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity, and all creation. All these ideas find expression in *The Unity We Seek*, especially in paragraph 4.

In section 1.2 the church is to proclaim reconciliation and provide healing, and overcome divisions. These divisions are recognized as more than doctrinal. The full extent of church division is expressed. However, the church is painfully divided. Divided churches contradict their witness and the nature of the church. This note is not articulated as specifically in the Budapest document, although in paragraph 2 there are hints of the same thought.

In section 1.3 there is an acknowledgement of the ecumenical progress that has occurred. A certain degree of communion already exists among the churches. Still

churches fail to draw the consequences for their life from the degree of communion already experienced and the agreement achieved. Here the Canberra statement touches on the topic of reception. The churches are satisfied to remain in division and to co-exist. Cooperation becomes a substitute for unity. The Budapest text does not address these issues.

In section 2.1 a description of unity with certain characteristics is supplied. These notes can claim an ecumenical consensus. The goal is full communion, where each church recognizes in each other the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in its fullness. These ideas are contained in the Budapest document, paragraph 1.

In section 2.2 diversities are portrayed as integral to the nature of communion. This view of diversity is extremely positive. It is not a matter that diversities are merely tolerated. Once after this affirmation are the limits of diversity taken up. Diversities are illegitimate when they make impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Savior. In *koinonia* diversities are brought together in harmony as gifts of the Spirit, contributing to the richness and fullness of the church. These notions are paralleled in the Budapest text in paragraph 2.

In section 3.1 the considerable progress and the continuing work in the ecumenical movement are both identified. Bilaterals and multilaterals have solid achievements. An enrichment and renewal of Christian life and work together for justice, peace, and the care of creation can be seen. *The Unity We Seek* does directly address these points in paragraph 3.

In section 3.2 a series of challenges are offered to all the churches. They include recognition of baptism, recognition of apostolic faith (especially as expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, consideration of forms of eucharistic hospitality, moves toward recognition of ministries, common witness to the gospel as a whole, work for justice, peace and integrity of creation, and help to parishes and communities in appropriate ways to express degrees of communion. The Canberra text is similar to the Budapest text in paragraphs 1 and 2, although it does not mention lifting condemnations as does the Lutheran text.

In section 4.1 there is the recognition that the Holy Spirit promotes *koinonia*. This idea expressed less specifically in terms of the third person of the Trinity is found in the Budapest statement, paragraph 1.

The Canberra document, *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling* builds on an emerging ecumenical convergence of several decades. It re-enforces this convergence and urges the churches to take the next steps. It contains five key ideas: the purpose of the church, unity as *koinonia*, the goal of full communion with its characteristics, the place and role of diversities, and the Holy Spirit as the promoter of *koinonia*.

The Budapest statement is shorter. It does not take up all the ideas found in the Canberra statement. As would be expected different words and images are sometimes employed. Accents are not the same. The Budapest text stresses somewhat more the



need for the churches to change and the need to overcome antagonisms and lift condemnations. The Canberra document reflects somewhat more clearly the conviction that unity is a gift, although this idea is not absent from the Budapest text. In terms of the five key ideas in *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling* there is a complete agreement with *The Unity We Seek*. The two documents from two different contexts viz., Lutheran and multi-lateral, are witnesses to the one ecumenical convergence about the nature of Christian unity.

#### A UNITED-REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

David M. Thompson

The exploration of the unity of the church in terms of the understanding of koinonia in "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling" (1) should be warmly welcomed, particularly if it makes it possible to go behind the ecclesiological deadlock that has been encountered in terms of the more traditional "marks of the church" approach. One primary reason for this welcome is that it places the initiative in the creation and sustaining of the church firmly with God. It is God who creates the world, and constantly seeks to restore fellowship when God's own creatures break it. Moreover, that fellowship is a reflection of the inner dynamics of the divine communion of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

In an important sense no single ecclesiology can lie behind any commentary on this development from the point of view of united and uniting churches. That group is very diverse, reflecting the particular denominational composition and geographical situation of the churches concerned. In some cases united churches include a broad range of the Protestant traditions in the area concerned -- for example, the churches of Bangladesh, North and South India and Pakistan. Elsewhere they involve two or three Protestant traditions whilst others remain outside -- for example, the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman or the Uniting Church in Australia. What unites them as a body is that all in varying degrees have broken through barriers which previously kept their constituent churches apart.

This can be illustrated from their responses to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. The United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom, for example, stated that to come together in one church before reaching total theological agreement provided both a context for, and a sense of commitment towards, continuing theological reflection which were decisively different from those which existed when the churches were yet separated. Both the United Reformed Church and the Uniting Church in Australia commented on the need to hold together differing theological beliefs, the former on baptism, the latter on the real presence in the eucharist. The United Church of Christ in the USA urged a stronger affirmation of the particular heritage of each church and of the capacity of each church, without compromising the integrity of its own historical witness, to be enriched by opening its life to the heritage of other churches. The emphasis on mutual recognition was echoed by the Uniting Church in Australia's comment that the traditions represented in the Faith and Order Commission were still far from harmonious in affirming that other traditions are genuinely part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. This probably explains the United Church of Canada's suggestion that concern for agreement on matters of ecclesiology and sacramental theology was felt more strongly in churches with a "catholic" ethos. When the comments of Asian united churches like the Church of South India and the Kyodan on the different perspective which comes from a minority situation are considered, it will be seen that the diversity of united churches is as great as that of other churches. (2)

Nevertheless, probably the most precious gift the united churches have to bring to ecumenical discussion is their experience as those who were once separated but have now been brought together. And most would say *they were brought*, rather than that *they came*: because those who guided the process would say that they responded to a call, not that they set about creating a new body themselves. This is the crucial distinction between united churches and conglomerate industrial firms which is most often ignored by those who use the term "merger" to describe what happens in church union schemes. So united churches are familiar with the inter-relation of gift and call.

From this perspective the most notable feature of the Canberra statement is that it seems to ignore the experience of the united churches almost completely. It is possible to read the words "agreements already achieved" at the end of paragraph 1.3 as a reference to united churches, but most readers would probably think first of multilateral or bilateral theological statements such as *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* or the final report of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue. In any case the statement that the churches "have remained satisfied to co-exist in division" sounds rather harsh to united and uniting churches, whose very existence is vivid testimony to their dissatisfaction with such co-existence.

Of course much remains to be done. The Church of South India has engaged in dialogue with Baptists, Lutherans and the Mar Thoma Church, and most united churches are committed to an ongoing quest for greater unity. The United Reformed Church in England and Wales, formed in 1972, embraced the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland in 1981. The steps taken towards fuller unity by united and uniting churches may be small, but they are significant. The failure to acknowledge them more openly leaves the impression that the drafters of the statement did not know quite what to make of them. Perhaps they felt uncomfortable precisely because united churches challenge the longer-established view that there is a fixed set of traditions of ecclesiological reflection. So long as these traditions are recognized by all, everyone knows the rules of the game and it is possible to identify different approaches to the unity of the church with these traditions.

Yet the fact that united churches do not fit easily into this traditional pattern of differing perspectives is not such a disadvantage as it appears at first sight. Although based on truths of revelation, ecclesiology, like all systematic theology, is an essentially human construction. The historian of theology is well aware of the various strands which constitute the various traditions. In drawing on some aspects of one and other aspects of another, those who represent united churches are not simply being eclectic. They are able to draw on the whole tradition creatively, because they have already taken steps which acknowledge the authenticity of the various traditions within the whole. The fourth consultation of united and uniting churches at Colombo in 1981 spoke of three shared experiences: the transformation of previous identities, the discovery that unity is a matter of mutual trust as much as of doctrinal, liturgical and organizational consensus, and witness to the importance of visible unity in each place.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus within the context of the Canberra statement they claim the experience of *koinonia* as the authority for their witness.

Those who would level the charge of eclecticism, or indeed suggest that the united

churches represent a humanly-achieved rather than God-given unity, are usually fearful of theological relativism. It is indeed true that most ecclesiology is written in the indicative mood: that is to say, it consists of general statements about the church as such without explicitly suggesting that they apply properly only to certain of the bodies which call themselves churches. The customary form of statements about the church is a series of general propositions, usually beginning with the purpose of God as revealed in scripture and gradually building up to a more detailed definition and description supported by the use of tradition or reason. Only at the end is there usually a specific reference to the particular church of the author(s) of the statement. Thus even the Canberra statement makes a characteristic (and unexplained) leap in the second sentence of paragraph 1.2 from talking about "the church" to "the churches". But the fact that there *are* different ways of looking at the church is not overcome by writing as if there were only one.

From the beginning of the World Council of Churches -- indeed from the beginning of the Faith and Order movement itself -- there has been a fear of theological relativism in general, and ecclesiological relativism in particular. The Toronto statement of 1950 specifically stated that "membership in the World Council of Churches does not imply that a church treats its own conception of the church as merely relative" (III, 4) and that "membership does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word" (IV, 4).<sup>(4)</sup> The problem that bothered the compilers of that statement was the view that, if every church which claimed to be a church was accepted as one, this implied an indifference to truth. It was comparatively easy to show that this was a *non sequitur*. The deeper problem was that if the true church was believed to be one and visible, then in a situation of division it seemed inevitable that only some (and perhaps only one) of the churches making that claim was indeed the true church.

The unseen guest at this particular table was, of course, the Roman Catholic Church, which was not then part of the Faith and Order movement. This is why the difference between the way in which the relationship of the Roman Catholic Church to the mystical body of Christ was expressed in the first draft of the Constitution on the Church presented to the Second Vatican Council in 1962, and the text of the final version approved in 1964, was so important. Instead of the original statement that the unique church of Christ "is" (*est*) the Catholic church, what became article 8 read that it "subsists in" (*subsistit in*) the Catholic church. The revision was made to meet criticisms of the earlier wording, and offered a more open view than that contained, for example, in Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, which unhesitatingly claimed that the true church of Jesus Christ was the one, holy, catholic, apostolic, Roman church.<sup>(5)</sup> What happened at Vatican II justifies the significance which commentators have attached to the more modest claim, and sets a question mark against more recent suggestions that the two expressions mean the same.<sup>(6)</sup>

Can visible unity be manifested in such a way that more than one church may be recognized as the true church? The advantage of an approach based on *koinonia* is that it acknowledges God's initiative. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God are inextricably linked with the communion of the Holy Spirit; and they are all bestowed upon us as gift. This *koinonia* should certainly be expressed in the common confession of the apostolic faith, a common sacramental life, a common life in which members and

ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled, and a common mission to all (para. 2.1); yet by God's grace that *koinonia* was manifested on this earth before any of those responses to it were made, and its existence does not depend on those responses. Rather when we see *koinonia* manifested, we should respond to it. The paradigm for such a response is Peter's reaction when he saw that God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit even on the Gentiles (Acts 10:47, 11:17). Those expressions of *koinonia*, such as a particular form of ministry, should not be made a precondition for recognition of its existence.

It is not immediately clear whether in speaking of full communion the remainder of paragraph 2.1 intends to identify this with the *koinonia* described in the opening sentence, but the definition is important anyway:

The goal of the search for full communion is realized when *all the churches* are able to recognize in *one another* the one, holy catholic and apostolic church in its *fullness*. This full communion will be expressed on *the local and the universal levels* through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in *all aspects of their life together at all levels* in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action. (emphases added)

Several questions stand out there, many of which were touched on at the meeting convened by Faith and Order at Salamanca in 1973 on "Concepts of Unity and Models of Union".

It is important to unpack the meaning of "the fullness of the church", since the term is being increasingly used. Is the "fullness" of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church which is to be recognized possessed by any church now, when churches are separated from one another, or is it also something yet to be realized? If the unity of the church is understood as *koinonia*, is this fullness the same as full communion? At Salamanca in 1973, Fr René Beaupère drew attention to the asymmetry and absence of reciprocity in the field of ecclesiology between the Catholic and Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation, quoting Fr Emmanuel Lanne's comment that the distinctive thing about the Catholic and Orthodox churches was "their claim to be the church in its fullness, whatever ecclesial character they are ready to recognize in other churches". But, he went on to say, "the reconciled church lies beyond all existing ecclesial realities, including, of course, the ecclesial reality represented by the Catholic church". So further progress in ecumenical dialogue would demand from all involved "not only humility but a genuine *metanoia*", as the Decree on Ecumenism indicated. (7)

The suggestion that the churches should be able to "recognize in one another" the one church is also significant. It implies that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness can be recognized in a single church (i.e. it is not something which by its nature is always above and beyond any particular church), and also that it can be recognized in several churches simultaneously. Both affirmations are important for united churches; but, as their Colombo report indicated, they reject any understanding of the term "mutual recognition" which implies that "some churches 'pass judgment' on whether others are worthy of such recognition". (8) All attempts at mutual recognition should be marked by humility, openness and sensitivity.

The reference to the local and universal levels picks up the New Delhi statement of 1961 on "The Nature of the Unity We Seek", with its emphasis on all in each place, and of the Uppsala emphasis of 1968 on the unity of all Christians in all places. The Salamanca statement of 1973 drew these two emphases together in saying that "the one church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united". This statement was endorsed by the Nairobi assembly in 1975, but there were difficulties in defining the meaning of the term "local church". Further valuable work was done on this at a consultation in Geneva in 1976. (9) This discussion is important for united churches because they are firmly committed to the goal of a locally important church. Hence it is particularly important that the reference to churches being "bound in all aspects of their life together at all levels" in the Canberra statement should not be understood as detracting from the primacy of local unity. Paragraph 2.2 rightly acknowledges appropriate diversity, rooted in theological traditions and various cultural, ethnic or historical contexts, but such diversity is not a reason for separation, particularly eucharistic separation, between Christians in one place -- rather it should be the occasion for celebrating the unity the Spirit gives.

There is perhaps also room for further reflection on the meaning of the universal level. The various Christian world communions, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches, the Anglican communion, the Lutheran World Federation, etc., make different claims for their own ecclesiological significance. All are, within certain limits, expressions of a geographical universality. But the universality of the church is more than geographical. It involves time as well as space, introducing the dimension of continuity. United churches fit uneasily into this picture, being in the nature of the case limited in geographical extent and mostly less than a century old. Some of these problems were addressed in the report *Unity: In Each Place... In All Places*, based on meetings held in 1982-83 between representatives of united churches and the Christian World Communions, the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Orthodox churches. (10) United churches do not see themselves as doctrinal minimalists, accepting only the minimum required for union, but as committed to a quest for a broadening communion such that their vision of the universal church is that which unites all Christians in all places.

United churches gladly endorse and accept the challenges in paragraph 3.2 of the Canberra statement. They see their own lives as united churches as embodiments of the kind of agreements in bilateral and multilateral dialogues referred to in the text. Indeed, one wonders why union schemes were not mentioned here. Furthermore, eucharistic hospitality and mutual recognition of ministries are present realities among many Protestant and united churches, not simply goals on the ecumenical agenda.

Yet it must be emphasized that united churches do not speak from any position of moral or ecclesiological superiority. In the words of St Paul, they acknowledge that "the body does not consist of one member but of many... If all were a single organ, where would the body be?" Rather, "if one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Cor. 12:14, 19, 26). (11) They are as aware as any of the thirst and hunger for full communion which the Holy Spirit gives, and the restlessness we feel until we grow together according to the wish and prayer of Christ. United churches do not claim that they have completely reached the goal; but they are sure that the joy they have received as their communion

has flourished is a gift of the Holy Spirit. They humbly seek a recognition of that from their partners in the one ecumenical movement.

#### NOTES

1. References to the text of the Canberra statement are to the official report of the WCC's seventh assembly, *Signs of the Spirit*, ed. Michael Kinnamon, Geneva, WCC, 1991, pp.172-174.
2. *Churches Respond to BEM*, ed. Max Thurian, Geneva, WCC: vol. I, 1986, pp.102-105; vol. IV, 1987, pp.158-159; vol. II, 1986, p.335; vol. IV, p.155; vol. IV, p.284; vol. II, pp.74,287-288.
3. *Growing towards Consensus and Commitment*, Faith and Order paper no. 110, Geneva, WCC, 1981, p.2.
4. "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches: The Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches", in G.K.A. Bell ed., *Documents on Christian Unity: Fourth Series, 1948-57*, London, Oxford UP, 1958, pp.218, 220.
5. *Mystici Corporis* (1943), in M. Chiniago, *The Teachings of Pope Pius XII*, London, Methuen, 1958, pp.217-218.
6. X. Rynne, *Letters from Vatican City*, London, Faber & Faber, 1963, pp.215-228, esp. 216; B.C. Butler, *The Theology of Vatican II*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967, p.70; J. Moorman, *Vatican Observed*, London, Catholic Book Club, 1967, pp.59-60. Cardinal Ratzinger, in discussing the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, has noted how a legal approach to the church could in certain circumstances offer more flexibility and openness than a "mystical" one: J. Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, New York, Crossroad, 1988, p.15.
7. R. Beaupère, "What Sort of Unity?", *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. XXVI, no. 2, April 1974, pp.193-194,197.
8. *Growing towards Consensus and Commitment*, l.c., op. cit. l.c., p.24.
9. *In Each Place: Towards a Fellowship of Local Churches Truly United*, Geneva, WCC, 1977.
10. M. Kinnamon ed., *Unity: In Each Place... In All Places...*, Faith and Order Paper no. 118, Geneva, WCC, 1983.
11. Significantly the themes of participation and renewal were emphasized at the fifth, most recent consultation of united and uniting churches. See *Living Today towards Visible Unity*, ed. Thomas F. Best, Faith and Order Paper no. 142, Geneva, WCC, 1988, report, pp.3-20.

#### Appendix

##### New Delhi 1961: Section III on Unity (para. 2)

"We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people."

##### Nairobi 1975: Section II on What Unity Requires (para. 3)

"The one Church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united. In this conciliar fellowship, each local church possesses, in communion with the others, the fullness of catholicity, witnesses to the same apostolic faith, and therefore recognizes the others as belonging to the same Church of Christ and guided by the same Spirit. As the New Delhi Assembly pointed out, they are bound together because they have received the same baptism and share in the same Eucharist; they recognize each other's members and ministries. They are one in their common commitment to confess the gospel of Christ by proclamation and service to the world. To this end, each church aims at maintaining sustained and sustaining relationships with her sister churches, expressed in conciliar gatherings whenever required for the fulfilment of their common calling."

##### Unity Statements of the Roman Catholic Church

###### Unitatis Redintegratio

The Decree of the Second Vatican Council, November 1964

1. "... Taking part in this movement, which is called ecumenical, are those who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour. They do this not merely as individuals but also as members of the corporate groups in which they have heard the Gospel, and which each regards as his Church and indeed, God's. And yet almost everyone, though in different ways, longs for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God..."

2. ... After being lifted up on the cross and glorified, the Lord Jesus poured forth the Spirit whom He had promised, and through whom He has called and gathered together the people of the New Covenant, which is the Church, into a unity of faith, hope and charity, as the Apostle teaches us: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4, 4-5). For "all you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3, 27-28). It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that He is the principle of the Church's unity. By distributing various kinds of spiritual gifts and ministries (cf. 1 Cor 12, 4-11), He enriches the Church of Jesus Christ with different functions "in order to equip the saints for the work of service, so as to build up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4, 12).

... It is through the faithful preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles and their successors - the bishops with Peter's successor at their head - through their administering the sacraments, and through their governing in love, that Jesus Christ wishes His people to increase, under the action of the Holy Spirit; and He perfects its fellowship in unity: in the confession of one faith, in the common celebration of divine worship, and in the fraternal harmony of the family of God... This is the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church, in Christ and through Christ, with the Holy Spirit energizing its various functions. The highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

4. ... Today, in many parts of the world, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, many efforts are being made in prayer, word and action to attain that fullness which Jesus Christ desires... While preserving unity in essentials, let everyone in the Church, according to the office entrusted to him preserve a proper freedom in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in the variety of liturgical rites, and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let clarity prevail. If they are true to this course of action, they will be giving ever richer expression to the authentic catholicity of the Church and, at the same time, to her apostolicity.

... Nevertheless, the divisions among Christians prevent the Church from realizing the fullness of catholicity proper to her sons who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects.

24. ... Further, this Council declares that it realizes that this holy objective - the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ - transcends human powers and gifts. It therefore places its hope entirely in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. "And hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Rom. 5,5)...

Source: Thomas F. Stravsky, CSP and John B. Sheerin, CSP, editors, *Doing the Truth in Charity*, Ecumenical Documents 1, New York and Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982

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